



# Guardian Angel Program Information

Thank you for considering opening your heart and home to one of our shelter's orphaned animals. Your generosity will provide young and old, injured and sick, abused and under socialized animals a chance to grow or heal before finding forever homes. *Every Guardian Angel makes a difference in the lives of our shelter pets!*

## ***Why become an Animal Care Services Guardian Angel?***

Being a Guardian Angel is a wonderful experience for you and your family- you can feel good knowing you have helped save an animal's life. Even better, you've created space in the shelter to accommodate other homeless animals. Animals in the Guardian Angel Program provide companionship and purpose- your act of kindness is repaid in rewards that are beyond words.

## ***Animals needing a temporary home and a Guardian Angel include:***

- Animals that require more socialization than available at the shelter
- Neglected or abused animals that need tender loving care
- Any healthy, non aggressive animal that is brought into Animal Care Services

## ***Frequently Asked Questions***

### **1. How long do animals remain in the Guardian Angel Program?**

It completely depends on the animal and the situation. The average stay in a Guardian Angel home is about a month. However, some animals may stay only a few weeks; others recovering from an injury may stay much longer.

### **2. Can I adopt the animal I have taken care of?**

Yes, as long as the Guardian Angel meets the shelter requirements necessary for adoption.

### **3. I live in a condo, townhome, or apartment; can I be a Guardian Angel?**

Yes, you can still be a Guardian Angel living in a small environment. Many of our animals need one-on-one socialization, so a small space can be beneficial. However, it's important that you select an appropriate animal for your lifestyle and are willing to commit to providing your new visitor with the needed physical and mental stimulation. And of course, you still need landlord approval and must abide by any weight or breed restrictions.

### **4. What if I have children?**

Bringing an orphaned animal into your home is a wonderful family experience. It's important to select an animal that is "age" appropriate with your children. You must also be diligent about providing guidance, instructions, and rules to your children about caring for an orphaned animal.



**5. *My yard doesn't have a fence! Can I still be a Guardian Angel?***

A yard is a nice-to-have for those early morning, or late night potty breaks and for a game of ball. Unfortunately many of the dogs we see at the shelter were “yard dogs” and developed behavior issues like fence running, barking, or digging because they were left alone in a backyard. Dogs need focused physical activity, mental stimulation and socialization...the best way to do this is by walking or running your foster dog on leash.

**6. *If I have my own animal(s), can I still be a Guardian Angel?***

Yes, the health risk is minimal if your animal(s) are current on their vaccinations, maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle, and are not elderly or very young.

**7. *What supplies are needed to be a guardian angel?***

Guardian Angels provide space, basic training, exercise and love for the animal. The shelter will provide you with all the other supplies and equipment needed throughout your experience.

**8. *Do I have to crate-train my Guardian Angel dog?***

No, but we do recommend it and will help you learn how. Some dogs do not like crates, and most dogs need to be transitioned or “trained” to use a crate, so it’s up to the Guardian Angel to decide whether to crate or not. Putting the dog in a crate while you are gone will give you peace of mind knowing that they are in a safe place, away from harm, and not doing any damage to your belongings or themselves. For many dogs, a crate can also represent a safe and comfortable place to call their own and provides them with a sense of security. Dogs actually like having a “den” to cuddle up in. *Crating should never be used as punishment.*

**9. *Do I need to have prior medical knowledge or expertise?***

No, most Guardian Angel Animals are healthy. But should you chose a special needs animal, you may be asked to dispense medicine to your foster so you will have to be comfortable following veterinarian’s instructions.

**10. *What if my foster animal becomes sick?***

All veterinarian services are provided by the shelter. If your new friend becomes sick, Guardian Angels must call the Guardian Angel emergency hotline at **(210) 259-5408 (after hours)** or the Foster Coordinator at **(210)207-6669 (regular business hours)** so you can be advised as to what action to take. You may use your own veterinarian at your *own expense*.

**11. *How much time each day is needed to foster?***

Commitment and responsibilities depend on the individual animal and situation. It’s essential that Guardian Angels understand that shelter animals may be stressed and moving the animal from the shelter to the Guardian Angel’s home is also very stressful. Guardian Angels should be patient and willing to commit to the animal because our goal is to keep them in a stable and consistent environment. That will help our Guardian Angel pets become adoptable.



### **12. How can I help my new visitor become more adoptable?**

Our orphaned animals benefit greatly from the exercise, basic training, special love and attention you give them. Providing them basic training and manners will increase their adoptability. Shy animals will benefit from your patience, routine and slowly exposing them to new people to build their confidence. Rambunctious adolescents who learn good manners will help show off their trainability and long term potential. And while puppies/kittens are adorable, they need a lot of love, attention, and hand-holding from humans to develop properly and feel secure.

### **13. Are animals in the Guardian Angel program ever euthanized?**

As a rule no, but there could be exceptions. Much energy, love, time and vet care is devoted to these animals, and the shelter is committed to finding homes for ALL the adoptable animals within its care. Almost all Guardian Angel Animals are healthy, happy animals but all animals can get sick. Sometimes these illnesses can be serious. The ACS veterinary staff will inform you of medical decisions involving your foster.

## **Important Rules and Reminders**

**In addition to the requirements and responsibilities outlined in the Guardian Angel agreement, and throughout this manual, all Guardian Angels MUST abide by the following rules:**

- Dogs must be on leash *at all times* when outdoors unless in your own *secured* fenced yard.
- Cats are not to be let outside for any reason.
- Any aggressive behavior must be immediately communicated to the Foster Coordinator.
- All vet visits must be through the ACS clinic or approved by ACS staff for a private clinic. Visits to non-ACS vets are at your own expense unless approved prior to the visit (i.e. emergency or trauma care).
- Guardian Angels must respond within 24 hours to communications from the Foster Coordinator or other shelter staff.

***Got a question? Need info on upcoming adoption events to bring your foster pet to? Need to schedule a vet appointment? Call the ACS Foster Coordinator at (210)207-6669. Email shelter staff at [acsguardianangels@sanantonio.gov](mailto:acsguardianangels@sanantonio.gov) for more information.***

